

Henry Lee to Andrew Jackson, November 18, 1826, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

MAJOR HENRY LEE TO JACKSON.1

1 Library of Congress, Van Buren MSS.

Washington, November 18, 1826.

dear Genl. The letter in which this is enclosed, you will find I wrote to you some time ago from Quebec. I did not think it worth the postage and therefore have detained it until I could get it franked. Perhaps in a liesure moment it may afford you some amusement. Since my return I have resigned my situation in the P. office. It was laborious and responsible without being honourable or lucrative. The sweets of liberty I again enjoy, and that stimulates me to vindicate the liberty of the nation. Your election I think will be its greatest triumph and I am therefore about to write a distinct and fair account of your life and character. I know that in general Biography, as well as anatomy, [one] should dissect only dead subjects. But the peculiar circumstances in which Envy and Merit have conspired to place you, render it important that a better knowledge of you should be communicated to your country men, than they now have. Will you do me the favour to communicate to me under cover to Genl. Houston any anecdotes you can remember of your early life—of your father and your mother, espically of the latter, and your own views of your own conduct on the points in your public life which have been most assailed—such as the execution of Arbuthnot and ambrister—that of the Indian prophet—your imprisonment of Callava, and your controversy with Fromentin. The invasion of Florida then a Spanish territory you also know has been much canvassed, as well as your proceedings at N. orleans in relation to Judge Hall and Govr. Claiborne and the declaration

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of Martial Law. If you think proper to communicate any confidential details either of your public or private life; they shall be sacredly cherished within my own bosom, but they might still enable me to give a juster and firmer colour to your history. I have heard you censured for over-praising the militia at the Battle of the Horse Shoe, and for being silent about Williams and his Regulars. In respect to Cockes Mutiny too I should be glad to get particulars, and should wish to learn how it was you thought of hanging the members of the Hartford Convention under the 2nd section of a certain article of war—as intimated in your letter to Mr. Monroe. I have supposed you wrote hastily and from the accounts you had seen of these infamous malcontents thought they wd. come under that clause. But as truth is my object, I want facts. I hope you know me well enough to believe that I will do you justice. . . .